A. M. D. G.

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE DIVINE OFFICE

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The Divine Office and the Roman Breviary

INTRODUCTION

"Divinum Officium imitatio est **coelestis concentus."** St. Bonaventure.

Just as the **Mass** is the one great sacrifice of the Church, so is the **Divine Office** her one great public prayer. When the cleric or priest recites it, he is not honoring God merely in his own name: he is, though alone and praying silently, the representative and spokesman of all the faithful on earth. "The Divine Office," writes Father A. B. O'Neill, "is the prayer of the Church, and the priest, with Breviary in hand, is the Church's ambassador, dowered with her credentials and charged with the mission of proffering to God the homage of her worship and her gratitude."

The **"Breviarium Romanum"** contains this Divine Office, which all priests and all clerics in sacred orders are obliged to recite daily. The word "Breviarium" (abridgment) indicates that the contents are a kind of epitome. About the 11th century an official and considerable shortening was made in the Office that had been recited up to that time, and the Office-book brought into use then was called a **"Breviarium."** The earliest MS. containing the entire canonical Office is of the year 1099, and is preserved in the Mazarin library.

The **Breviary** is divided, for convenience, into four volumes, corresponding to each season of the year: Pars Hiemalis, Pars Verna, Pars Aestiva, Pars Autumnalis. In the introduction to the **Pars Hiemalis** will be found, besides the usual matter, the "Divino Afflatu" of Pius X, which went into effect Jan. 1st, 1913, and the collection of **general rubrics** governing the recitation of the Office.

The Apostolic Constitution "Divino Afflatu" introduced a momentous change in the Office, for it set aside a distribution of the Psalms, respected in the Office for more than a thousand years. It had a **twofold purpose: 1st,** to bring about the recitation of the entire Psalter (150 Pss.) within the week, and to so arrange the parts of the Office as to lighten the burden of saying it; **2nd,** to restore the seasons of the Ecclesiastical Year to their proper place of honor, without, however, depriving the Saints of the honor due them.

When recited **privately,** i. e., outside of choir, the order relative to the different Hours is not obligatory, though it is of strict obligation to recite the whole Office, from Matins to Complin, before midnight. No ceremonies are obligatory in private recitation, though they are "laudabiliter" observed, when convenient.

Matutinum et Laudes ante Missam recitari debent, secundum rubricam (I, i). Attamen haec obligatio ne sub levi quidem est, si honesta causa subsit, ut esset major devotio. **Pronuntiatio** debet esse vocalis, sed non est necesse, ut recitans se audiat. Recitandae praeterea sunt Horae **"digne, attente ac devote,"** sed sufficit, secundum Layman, Croix, Noldin. Ojetti, aliosque, **attentio externa.** Ut quis satisfaciat, Horae recitari possunt **quocumque in loco** et **quocumque situ. Rubricae** vero quae stare, genuflectere, etc., jubent, **ad chorum** pertinent. D'Ann. III, 150.

Each volume of the **Breviary** is divided into:

I. **The Ordinarium:** containing prayers to be said before and after the recitation of the Office; particular rubrics; Absolutions and Blessings for the Lessons in Matins; Benedictus; Magnificat; Nunc dimittis; Preces; ferial Chapters; etc.

II. **The Psalterium:** containing the common parts of the Office for Sunday and the days of the week. From it every Office takes something. The large Breviaries reprint ferial and dominical Chapters in the Psalter.

III. **The Proprium de Tempore:** containing the **"Scriptura Occurrens"** (Script. Occ.), i. e. selections from Sacred Scripture arranged according to the Sundays and ferias of the Ecclesiastical Year; parts proper to the Ecclesiastical seasons; also Antiphons, Prayers proper to each Sunday, and hence Prayer proper to ferias, etc.—cf. each volume of the Breviary.

IV. **The Proprium Sanctorum:** containing parts of Office proper to the fixed Feasts of the Blessed Virgin, the Saints, and a few of our Lord.

V. **The Commune Sanctorum:** containing or indicating parts of Office not found in the Proprium Sanctorum.

Then follow the "Commune Dedicationis Ecclesiae," "Commune Festorum B. M. V.," "Officium S. Mariae Virginis in Sabbato," etc.

VI. **The Proprium of Religious Orders, Congregations, Dioceses:** which should be consulted for any Office peculiar to them.

Offices may be divided into:

(A): Offic. prop., embracing dupl. 1ae et 2ae classis, dupl. maj., semidupl.
(B): Offic. ut in Psalt. et prop. loco, embracing dupl., semidupl.
Sunday: Dom., de ea, in the Ordo.
Ferial: de ea, de eo; only 1 Noct. in Mat. (9 Antt., 9 Pss. and 3 Lessons).
Simple: simpl. (B); only 1 Noct. in Mat. (9 Antt., 9 Pss. and 3 Lessons). No 2nd Vesp.

General directions for reciting the **Office:**

1) **Open Ordo** at date and see the **nature** of the **Office** of the day—it is indicated after the letter assigning the color of vestments. Then look **first** at the Proper of the Office in the Breviary; what is not given there will be found in the Common, Psalter and Ordinary.—In using the **schema** opposite, simply run the eye down the **column** in which the Office of the day is classified and take the **part** from the section of the Breviary therein indicated.

2) **When directed** elsewhere in the Breviary, read **that part only** you **were** directed there to take.

In the Schema Opposite:

Feast means: take part from the **Proper** or the **Common** of the Office.
P. de T. means: take part from the **Proper de Tempore.** Cf. III above.
Psalt. (S) means: take part from Sunday in the Psalter.
Psalt. f. c. means: take part from current feria in the Psalter.
Pr. Sunday means: take prayer, unless proper, from preceding Sunday **in the** P. de T.

The **Ordo** will always indicate when the **Suffragium** and **Preces** are to be said.

The **Ordo** will always note any **exceptions** to the Schema.

SCHEMA

	(A)	(B)	SUNDAY	FERIAL	SIMPLE
MATINS					
Aperi, Domine,† etc.........	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Pater, Ave, Credo, etc.......	"	"	"	"	"
Invitatorium (twice).........	Feast	Feast	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Feast
Venite (altern. with Inv.)....	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Hymn.....................	Feast	Feast	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Feast
1st Nocturn				9 Antt.	and 9 Pss.
3 { Antiphon (part or entire)..	Feast	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
3 { Psalm, Gloria, Ant. (entire)	"	" "	" "	" "	" "
Vers., Resp., Pater (no Amen)	"	" "	" "	" "	" "
Absolution................	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
3 { Jube, Domine, etc., Benediction..............	"	"	"	"	"
3 { Lesson, Tu autem........	Feast	Script. Occ.	Script. Occ.	Script. Occ.	Script. Occ.
3 { Responsorium...........	"	" "	" "	" "	" "
2nd Nocturn				(3 Lessons)	(2 Lessons: 3rd from Feast, Te Deum)
3 { Antiphon (part or entire)..	Feast	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)		
3 { Psalm, Gloria, Ant. (entire)	"	" "	" "		
Vers., etc., as in 1st Noct....	"	" "	" "		
Lessons, etc., as in 1st Noct...	"	Feast	P. de T.		
3rd Nocturn					
3 { Antiphon (part or entire)..	Feast	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)		
3 { Psalm, Gloria, Ant. (entire)	"	" "	" "		
Vers., etc., as in 1st Noct....	"	" "	" "		
Lessons, etc., as in 1st Noct..	"	Feast	P. de T.		
Te Deum (after last Lesson)..	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary		
(If you stop here, cf. Rubric)					
LAUDS					
Pater, Ave (unless Mat. precedes)..................					
Deus† in adjutorium, etc.....					
5 { Antiphon (part or entire)..	Feast	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
5 { Psalm, Gloria............	Psalt. (S)	" "	" "	" "	" "
5 { Antiphon (entire).........	Feast	" "	" "	" "	" "
Chapter, D. G., Hymn, Vers. and Resp................	"	Feast	" "	" "	Feast
Antiphon (part or entire).....	"	"	P. de T.	P. de T.	"
Benedictus, Gloria..........	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Antiphon (entire)..........	Feast	Feast	P. de T.	P. de T.	Feast
Preces (if Prec. fer. in Ordo)..	....	....	....	Ordinary	....
Dom. Vob., Oremus: Prayer..	Feast	Feast	P. de T.	Pr. Sunday	Feast
Commemoration (if any).....	cf. date	cf. date	cf. date	cf. date	cf. date
Suffragium (if Suffr. in Ordo)	....	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Dom. Vob., Ben. Dom., etc..					
Ant. finalis B. M. V. (cf. Rubric)..................	Ordinary	"	"	"	"

SCHEMA

	(A)	(B)	SUNDAY	FERIAL	SIMPLE
PRIME					
Pater, Ave, Credo, etc. (always)					
Hymn	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
Antiphon (part only)	Feast (Lds.)	“ “	“ “	“ “	“ “
3 Pss. (4, if Sch. II used in Lds.)	Psalt. (S)	“ “	“ “	“ “	“ “
Quicumque (if Ordo directs)	....	....	Ordinary	....	....
Antiphon (entire)	Feast (Lds.)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
Chapter, D.G., Resp. brev., etc.	Reg. Saec.	Reg. Saec.	Reg. Saec.	Pacem	Reg. Saec.
Preces (if Prec. fer. or Prec. in Ordo)	....	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Dom. vob., Oremus: Domine Deus	Ordinary	“	“	“	“
Dom. vob., Pretiosa, etc	“	“	“	“	“
Deus in adjut. (3, no blessing)	“	“	“	“	“
Gloria, Kyrie, Pater	“	“	“	“	“
Respice, etc., Oremus: Dirigere	“	“	“	“	“
Jube Dom. etc., Dies et actus	“	“	“	“	“
Lectio brevis	Feast (N.)	Feast (N.)	“	“	Feast (N.)
Tu autem Domine, etc	Ordinary	Ordinary	“	“	Ordinary
Adjut. nost. etc., Benedicite	“	“	“	“	“
Dom. nos benedicat†	“	“	“	“	“
(Pater and Amen, if you stop here)					
LITTLE HOURS					
Pater, Ave, etc. (always)					
Hymn	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
Antiphon (part only)	Feast (Lds.)	“ “	“ “	“ “	“ “
3 Psalms, Gloria	Psalt. (S)	“ “	“ “	“ “	“ “
Antiphon (entire)	Feast (Lds.)	“ “	“ “	“ “	“ “
Chapter, D. G., Resp. brev., etc.	“	Feast	“ “	“ “	Feast
Preces (if Prec. fer. in Ordo)	....	....	....	Ordinary	....
Dom. vob., Oremus: Prayer	Feast	Feast	P. de T.	Pr. Sunday	Feast
Dom. vob., etc					
(Pater and Amen, if you stop here)					

N.B. In **(A)**, Feasts antiphons for Prime and Little Hours (Terce, Sext, Nones) are antiphons 1, 2, 3 and 5 respectively of Lauds of the Feast.

For **Psalms** to be said in Prime, cf. Rubric. The Ordo always indicates when 4 Psalms are to be said. This is always the case when Sch. II of Pss. is used in Lauds.

In **Prime,** the Lectio brevis for (A), (B) and Simple is the Chapter of Nones in the Proper or the Common of the Office.

In **Prime,** the Verse in the Resp. brev. must be changed during certain seasons of the year. The Rubric and asterisk * in the Ordo indicate when.

Prime, Little Hours and Complin have Hymn **"ejusdem metri"**—hence the doxology (last stanza) is changed when Ordo indicates.

SCHEMA

	(A)	(B)	SUNDAY	FERIAL	SIMPLE
VESPERS (1st or 2nd)					
Pater, Ave, etc. (always).....					
5 { Antiphon (part or entire)..	Feast	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
Psalm, Gloria............	"	" "	" "	" "	" "
Antiphon, entire..........	"	" "	" "	" "	" "
Chapter, D. G............ ...	"	Feast	" "	" "	Feast
Hymn, Vers. and Resp......	"	"	" "	" "	"
Antiphon (part or entire)....	"	"	P. de T.	P. de T.	"
Magnificat†...............	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Antiphon (entire)...........	Feast	Feast	P. de T.	P. de T.	Feast
Preces (if Prec. fer. in Ordo)...	....	....	....	Ordinary	....
Dom. vob., Oremus: Prayer..	Feast	Feast	P. de T.	Pr. Sunday	Feast
Commemoration (if any).....	cf. date	cf. date	cf. date	cf. date	cf. date
Suffragium (if Suffr. in Ordo)	....	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Dom. vob., etc..............					
(Pater and Amen, if you stop here)					
COMPLIN					
Jube, Domine, etc., Noctem, etc., etc..................	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Antiphon (part only)........	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. (S)	Psalt. f. c.	Psalt. f. c.
3 Pss., Antiphon (entire).....	" "	" "	" "	" "	" "
Hymn, Chapter, D. G., Resp. br.......................	" "	" "	" "	" "	" "
Salva nos..................	" "	" "	" "	" "	" "
Nunc dimittis,† Gloria.....	" "	" "	" "	" "	" "
Salva nos (entire)...........	" "	" "	" "	" "	" "
Preces (if Prec. in Ordo).....	....	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary	Ordinary
Dom.vob.,etc., Oremus: Visita	Psalt. (S)	"	"	"	"
Dom. vob., Ben. Dom., D. G.	" "	"	"	"	"
Benedicat† et custodiat......	" "	"	"	"	"
Ant. finalis B. M. V.........	Ordinary	"	"	"	"
Pater, Ave, Credo...........	"	"	"	"	"
Sacrosanctae, etc., Pater, Ave	"	"	"	"	"

N.B The **Ordo** will always indicate which Vespers to say in case of concurrence. Consult the notes following.

There is but a **single** Suffragium in Vespers, and is the same as that in Lauds. During the Paschal season this is replaced by the Commemoratio de Cruce.

Complin always ends as above, even when Matins immediately follow. The **Antiphona finalis** varies with the season.

When the **Sacrosanctae, Pater** and **Ave** are recited, **kneeling, after** the Office, pardon is obtained for the faults committed during the recitation.

For the **Officium Stae. Mariae Virginis in Sabbato—cf. the Breviary** after the Common of the Blessed Virgin.

SUMMARY

(A): Offic. prop.:

Matins: everything from the............................**Feast**

Lauds: everything except the Psalms from the..............**Feast**
Psalms from Sunday in the.......................**Psalter (S)**

Prime: Antiphon and Lectio brevis from the................**Feast**
Hymn, Psalms, etc., from Ordinary and the..........**Psalter (S)**

Little Hours: Ant., Chapter, Vers. and Resp., Prayer........**Feast**
Hymn, Psalms...................................**Psalter (S)**

Vespers: everything except Magnificat from the............**Feast**

Complin: everything from Sunday in the..................**Psalter (S)**

(B): Offic. ut in Psalt. et prop. loco:

Matins: Invitatory and Hymn, Lessons of 2nd and 3rd Noct.
from...**Feast**
Antiphons, Psalms, Vers. and Resp.................**Psalter f. c.**
Lesson of 1st Nocturn............................**Script. Occ.**

Lauds: Antiphons and Psalms from the....................**Psalter f. c.**
Chapter, Hymn, Ant. ad Ben., Prayer from the.......**Feast**

Prime: everything except Lectio brevis from the.............**Psalter f. c.**
Lectio brevis is the Chapter of Nones of the..........**Feast**

Little Hours: Hymns, Antiphons, Psalms from the...........**Psalter f. c.**
Chapter, Vers. and Resp., Prayer from the...........**Feast**

Vespers: Antiphons and Psalms from the..................**Psalter f. c.**
Chapter, Hymn, Ant. ad Mag., Prayer from the.......**Feast**

Complin: everything from the Ordinary and the.............**Psalter f. c.**

Sunday Office: de ea, Dom.:

Differs from (B) semiduplex only in:

Matins: the 9 Lessons, and Resp. for the 3 Noct. from the....**P. de T.**
Prayer, Ant. ad Ben. and Mag. from the...................**P. de T.**
Everything else from the Ordinary and the.................**Psalter (S)**

Ferial Office: de ea, de eo (Sabb.):

Differs from (B) semiduplex only in:

Matins: only 1 Noct. (9 Antt. and 9 Pss. and then the 3 Lessons)
Prayer, unless proper, from the preceding Sunday in the......**P. de T.**
Everything else, including Preces, from the Ordinary and the..**Psalter f. c.**
The Chapter for Prime is "Pacem" in Ordinary or the........**Psalter f. c.**

Simple Office: simpl. (B) or simpl. in Ordo:

Differs from (B) semiduplex only in:

Matins: only 1 Noct. (9 Antt. and 9 Pss. without interruption)
Lessons 1 and 2 from the.........................**Script. Occ**
3rd Lesson from the.............................**Feast**

No 2nd Vespers.

A FEW NOTES

1) Commemorations are made in **Lauds**, and **1st** and **2nd Vespers.**

The **following** must be said in the **order** given:

Lauds: Antiphon (entire) of the Benedictus of the Office Commemorated;
Verse and Response immediately preceding this Antiphon;
Oremus: then prayer of the Office Commemorated.

Vespers: Antiphon (entire) of the Magnificat of the Office Commemorated;
Verse and Response immediately preceding this Antiphon;
Oremus: then prayer of the Office commemorated.

A kind of **Commemoration** is also made in **Matins,** by replacing the **regular** 9th lesson by a **special** one. Indicated thus in the Ordo:

Lect. 9 de hom. fer.: 1st lesson of the current feria from the P. de T.

Lect. 9 de hom. vigil.: 1st lesson of the vigil, containing the Gospel and homily.

Lect. 9 de hom. Dom.: 7th lesson of the Office of Sunday in the P. de T.

Lect. 9 de S. (name): the Saint's history compressed into a single lesson.

2) Most Offices have **two Vespers,** one at the beginning called **1st Vespers,** the other at the end called **2nd Vespers.** Only **one Vespers** is said each **day.**

1st Vespers ("Vesp. de seq."), if said, are always said on **preceding** day;

2nd Vespers ("Vesp." or "Ad Vesp."), if said, are always said on the **day itself.**

In case of **Concurrence:**

a) One of the Vesp. is said **entire,** the other **entirely omitted;** or

b) One of the Vesp. is said **entire,** the other **commemorated,** indicated in Ordo:

- *α)* **Vesp. de seq. com. praec.:** 1st Vesp. of the day following, using, however, to-day's Antt. and Pss. (except in (A) feasts, when they are proper), and commemorating to-day's 2nd Vesp.
- *β)* **Ad or In Vesp. com. seq.:** recite to-day's 2nd Vesp., making merely a commemoration from to-morrow's 1st Vesp.; or

c) The two Offices may each **share equally** in the Vesp., indicated thus:

Vesp. a cap. de seq. com. praec.: recite to-day's 2nd Vesp. as far as the end of the Pss., then to-morrow's 1st Vesp. from the Chapter to the end of the Office, commemorating to-day's 2nd Vesp.

3) The **abbreviations** used in the Ordo are explained in its introduction. An Office merely commemorated is said to be simplified, since simples are regularly only commemorated.

4) In **doubles** and higher Offices, the antiphons are said entire **before** and **after** the Psalms in Matins, Lauds and Vespers. In **semidoubles** and lower, the Antiphons are said **entire only after** the Psalms.

The "**Gloria Patri**" etc. is said after every Psalm, unless a Rubric forbids.

"**Tu autem Domine, miserere nobis. Deo Gratias,**" after all Lessons.

5) For **further information** regarding the **Divine Office,** cf.:

A History of the Roman Breviary (3rd ed.)—By **Mgr. P. Battifol.**

The New Psalter and Its Use—By **Rev. E. Burton** and **Rev. E. Myers.**

Notes on the New Rubrics—By **Rev. A. J. Hetherington.**